

Foreword

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IN THE COURSE of my twenty-two years off and on among the Bedouins of Arabia, migrating, hunting, raiding, starving and feasting with them, I experienced wonderful friendships, and I am indebted to many of these desert friends:

To "The Lord of the land of his fathers", *the King of Arabia*: 'Abd el-'Aziz ibn Sa'ūd el Wabbab and his governors and chiefs in Nejd, Hasa, Jauf, and Kaf, and his representatives in Damascus, Cairo and London.

And to *Amir Nuri Sba'lan*, his family and the tribe of the Ruala, for the unique opportunities which enabled me to gain an intimate knowledge of Arab traditions and Bedouin customs, and to traverse so much unknown territory, so that I came to understand the soul of their mysterious country and the minds of these dwellers in the black tents of Ishmael; favours which alone made it possible to collect the material which has gone to the making of this work.

I feel a deep sense of gratitude for the inspiration kindled within me by the work and ideals of the late *Lady Anne Blunt*, which have sustained me in my quest for the true Arab horse. And to *Mr. W. K. Kellogg*, of Battle Creek, Michigan, who dedicated his ranch and

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stud farm in California to students of animal husbandry with an endowment large enough to secure forever the raising of pure-bred Arab horses.

To *Charles Doughty*, England's classic traveller in the "Island of the Arabs", I owe the fact that from my very first day in the wilderness I could look with a "gentle-spirit" and "tender-heart" upon the "ferocious desert" and the "fanatical hostility of the Arabs", and come out with the intense satisfaction that I had lived in peace under the goat-hair tents of the Ishmaelites.

I am also greatly indebted to *Mr. J. K. Wright* of the American Geographical Society and to "*Shaykh Musa er Rueyli*" (*Prof. A. Musil of Prague*) because his publications enabled me to take a new and more intelligent interest in my travels in Arabia and especially among the Ruala, into whose fellowship we both (though we never met) have been adopted as members of the chief's family and the tribe.

My debt to "*Colonel Lawrence of Arabia*" is great, in that he has been my constant companion through the pages of his book on my last eight journeys, and has fortified my soul by his incomparable example of perseverance to carry me through the most trying conditions of the desert. I have met many of his old companions and also enemies, and whether they loved or feared him, they all agree that "*Aurans*" was the most sincere friend that ever came from Europe to take up the Arab cause, though most of them regretted that he did not have a chance to side with Ibn Sa'ûd. I have also to express my sincere thanks to *Mr. Gomer Williams* for

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121 call of adventure which led my footsteps into the wilder parts of the Near East, but just the love of horses and in particular of the splendid Arab horse. So intense was (and is) my passion for this noble animal, that I wished to meet him in his native pastures and there learn his history and the secrets of his breeding; and, if there was a secondary interest, it was to enquire into the wanderings of the Bedouin tribes. This grew more fascinating the further I proceeded, so that I came to study the geographical features of their pasture-areas and lines of migration, their historic past and ethnographical peculiarities—subjects on which I have published in various lands a series of special articles, maps, and tables.¹

● 114 The Arabian peninsula is inconceivably vast; its area is half as great as that of the United States of America. My wanderings, naturally, stretched over only a part of Arabia, the highland plateau of the Bedouins that lies inland.

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114 Although I touched the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf more than once, I have never yet visited such well-known places as Aden or Oman, not to mention Mecca and the Rub-el-Khali, which was crossed for the first time by two Englishmen (Bertram Thomas and St. John Philby) only a few years ago. I claim one thing, however: that during my sojourn in Arabia, I lived entirely as a Bedouin. I had never any need to deny my

¹ *American Geographical Society* (New York, 1930); *Asia* (New York, 1929); *Hippologische Sammlung*, Schickhardt and Ebner (Stuttgart, 1930); *Sportologie* (Los Angeles, 1931); *Senkt Georg* (Berlin, 1930-33); *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* (Berlin, 1933); *Country Life* (London, 1934); *Sphere* (London, 1934); *Strand* (London, 1935), etc., and *Bulletins of the Agricultural College and Animal Breeding Associations in Hungary, Poland, Russia, Japan, Argentina, Egypt, etc.*

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race or my creed amongst the Arabs. I was never once the butt of their mockery or suffered at their hands any discourtesy.

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The reason that I was allowed to live with them on the most intimate terms and was implicitly trusted by them may perhaps be explained by the simple fact that I refrained from mingling in their politics, except when invited to give my opinion in internal tribal affairs. Furthermore, I was careful to adhere to all their cherished customs and prejudices, particularly those relating to their women. These are strict, and no European can hope to gain the complete confidence of a Bedouin without studied observance of them.

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Like the desert itself, the Bedouins, looked upon from the outside, have a forbidding appearance; but the closer one lives to them, the better one comes to know them and is the more astonished at their placid unconcern.

The most astounding thing, which will ever command my admiration, is the equanimity with which the Bedouin leads his family and his herds from the oases and cultivated lands into the wilderness and across desert areas, which appear to be absolutely barren. The first cloud proclaiming the advent of rain lures him irresistibly to the highlands of the Hamad and the flint desert or into the sand dunes of the Nufud. After the first rains the bold camel-plunderers also leave their tents. With their war-mares tied to their racing camels, they ride out into the blue, often covering a thousand miles, "and sit on the roads (as the holy script says) and lie in wait for booty like an Arab in the desert. . . ."

The Heirs of Ishmael

643 virtual dictator of Arabia, to whom the world to-day
669 accords its sincere admiration.

At the time of which I speak, however—in 1912—
622 Nauaf, the son of Nuri Sha'lan, was at war against the
619 hereditary enemy of the Ruala, the Shammar Bedouins
721 and their ruler, Ibn Rashid, who held Jauf. The capture
of that oasis was the objective of long and bitter fighting. Much blood was shed; every year took its long toll of human lives. Now, however, Nauaf had come close to his goal and soon Jauf actually fell into his hands.

●114 Nauaf had three sons, amongst whom was the young Prince, Amir Fuaz; it is with him I would begin my tale. For to this child I owe the fact that I was privileged to live with the Ruala as one of them, that I was permitted to visit them eleven times in twenty-two years; that I wandered, hunted, and fought with them; that on horseback or camel-back, I crossed and recrossed their grazing-grounds year in and year out; that I was adopted into the tribe as a Rueyli chieftain; and that they knew and loved me as I knew and loved them.

856 Amir Fuaz was just eight years of age. Even so, he
868 already had the reputation of being an adroit rider and a good shot, though his legs were yet rather short to grip the flanks of a mare and his arms too weak to balance a carbine for any length of time. "Wordly learning", as the Arabs call reading and writing, held no interest for him. He preferred to go camel-riding with me or to join
777 in the hunt. His mother, Misha'il, who had gone blind, proudly related to me that it was an omen of good for the future that Nuri Sha'lan had laid the halter of his war-mare and a silver *kbenjer* in the boy's cradle. The

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Faris—"A Friend of God"

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AT THE OUTBREAK of the Great War—I had then already spent three years among the Arabs—I returned to the land of my birth and offered my services as a volunteer in the German Cavalry. I was, however, sent to Stamboul and served under the Turkish Crescent during the fighting at the Dardanelles. Later, I was attached to the Fourth Turkish Brigade on the Suez Canal. Here, like so many others, I fell a victim to spotted typhus; but, unlike the majority, I recovered. But my health was so undermined that I was invalided home. Apparently Fate had no wish that I should become mixed up in the desert warfare and politics of the Bedouins. I was laid low again with malaria and an abscess on the lung, the aftermath of the typhus. In the long run, the compulsory rest was beneficial. God had blessed me with an exceptionally tough constitution.

Up to now my history ran as follows: When eighteen years of age I went to North Africa; a year later I was in Arabia; then, when I was twenty-one and a half years old, the scene of my activities was in and about the Dardanelles, followed by a gruelling experience for eight months near the Suez Canal, which resulted in long periods of illness. When I celebrated my twenty-fourth birthday, I was a mere skeleton, my blood reeking with fever. Though I could scarcely stand on my legs, I expressed my willingness to serve again in Turkey, but the

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authorities did not want me there, and instead sent me 114 ●
to Russia, where I spent eighteen months at Prisoners' Clearing Camps. The Armistice found me in the Ukraine, with Germany in collapse and Poland in revolution. Much of all that I had hoped for was lost. Europe held no future for me, and the Near East was closed to Germans. I set out for California and arrived there with one dollar and fifty cents in my pocket, after I had sold my camera and two lenses (faithful companions in many lands) in New York, in order to raise money for the fare to Santa Anna. And here, in this land of milk and honey, of fruit and sunshine, I could look forward to a happy and healthy new life. Living on a ranch, I spent eight or more hours each day on horseback. Thus I recovered my health and my blood was renewed. By the year 1926 I was indeed a new man, and my thoughts began to wander again to Arabia. The yearning grew and grew—this yearning for my Bedouins. Was Amir Fuaz still alive? How were the Ruala doing? And old Nuri? The day came when the yearning could no longer be resisted.

Indeed, four weeks later I celebrated my reunion with 643
Nuri Sha'lan in Damascus, where he had lived since the end of the Great War. At eighty years of age he was still head of his tribe, although he dwelt in a palace in a city and drew an ample revenue from the French. Lately he became a deputy in the Syrian Parliament. The leadership of his tribe in its desert home he had entrusted to no other than Amir Fuaz, his grandson. The latter's father, Nauaf, and two other sons of Nuri, who were

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Lt Hassan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwanda MD4



Portrait of Hassan T-3

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Al-Sajb Mûsa ar-Rwejli

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The Rwala are recognized by all their neighbors as the only true Bedouin tribe of northern Arabia. Traveling and camping with them for months I had ample opportunities of studying their life. The results of these studies are given in this volume. I have found it advisable, however, to add some details which I learned from my companion Blejhân eben Meşreb, who was not a Rwejli (or member of the Rwala), but hailed from the Kmuşa division of the Sba'a tribe. Both Sba'a and Rwala belong to the Aneze group, the Kmuşa being neighbors of the Rwala and almost identical with the latter in manners and customs.

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In transliterating Arabic terms, phrases, sentences, ditties, and poems I have tried to reproduce exactly the words of those whom I quote — Rwala, for the most part. I have not corrected their many inconsistencies in grammar and pronunciation. All the ditties, songs, and poems were explained to me in the desert. I used no dictionary as an aid to their translation.

In transliterating Arabic letters I have used the same signs as in my works *The Northern Heğâz* (New York, 1926), *Arabia Deserta*, *The Middle Euphrates* (New York, 1927), *Palmyrena*, and *Northern Neğd* (New York, 1928), attempting to express each sound by a single letter or a single symbol. The meaning of the different symbols is indicated below.

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Closing the publication of the results of my explorations and studies since 1908 I must thank all those who have helped me morally and materially both in the East and West, among them: the Academy of Sciences, Vienna; Archbishop Dr. František Bauer, Olomouc; al-Hāğğ Dâūd eben Sulejmân eben Šâlēh, Damascus; Khalil Fattal, Damascus; Dr. Otto Feilchenfeld, Prague; the Geographical Society, Vienna; Dr. Max Ritter von Gutmann, Vienna; Abbot Dr. Gilbert Helmer, Teplá; Dr. Joseph Ritter von Karabacek, Vienna; Jindřich Klinger, Prague; the Lackenbacher Fund of the Theological Faculty of the University of Vienna; the reigning Prince Johann von und zu Liechtenstein, Vienna; Dr. Melchior Mlčoch, Olomouc; Prince an-Nûri eben Ša'lân; Baron Louis Rothschild, Vienna; Philipp Alois Schoeller, Vienna; Abbot Dr. Method Zavoral, Prague.